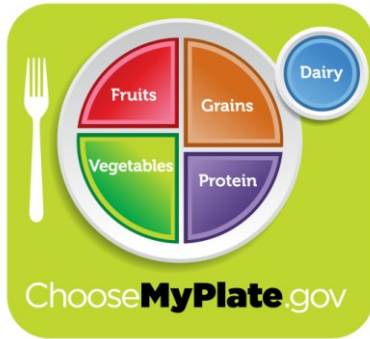

Guidance on Use of USDA's MyPlate and Statements About Amounts of Food Groups Contributed by Foods on Food Product Labels (Revised September 2011)



MyPlate is USDA's primary food group symbol, a food icon that serves as a powerful reminder to make healthy food choices and to build a healthy plate at mealtimes. It is a visual cue that identifies the five (5) basic food groups from which consumers can choose healthy foods to build a healthy plate. It directs individuals to a website — ChooseMyPlate.gov — which contains resources and tools for more specific information about what and how much to eat. On this website, consumers will find specific recommendations for each USDA Food Group, based on the *2010 Dietary Guidelines for*

Americans (DGA), including proportions based on research that relate to individual calorie and nutrient needs. At ChooseMyPlate.gov, consumers can determine their individual eating patterns that fit their lifestyle and food preferences.

With regard to the use of the MyPlate icon in print and other media, conditions of use and a style guide are provided at ChooseMyPlate.gov. This guidance includes food labeling applications. Essentially, use of MyPlate cannot suggest or imply USDA endorsement of the product or service. On labeling, use of the icon cannot be misleading on product packaging or at retail sale. It's possible that placing the MyPlate icon on food packaging may result in a halo effect to the product. While there are no specific criteria governing which products can bear the MyPlate graphic, when manufacturers choose to use MyPlate on packaging, they are highly encouraged to only do so on products that are relatively nutrient-dense, as defined by the 2010 Dietary Guidelines¹.

Further details about using MyPlate on labeling and making statements about food group recommendations based on the eating patterns found in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines are provided below.

Use of the MyPlate Icon

Because consumers have different calorie and nutrient needs, the MyPlate symbol is suggestive of proportions of food groups rather than prescriptive, and it does not provide specific proportions or amounts to consume from each food group over the day. Therefore, the MyPlate icon should not be used on food labels in conjunction with what and how much to eat. For example, labels should not say that MyPlate recommends X cups of fruit/day.

MyPlate should be used on food packaging to point consumers to ChooseMyPlate.gov to get more information about what and how much to eat. In this case, the MyPlate icon on food packaging should be used with text, such as:

- Learn about healthy eating at ChooseMyPlate.gov.
- For information about food and health, go to ChooseMyPlate.gov.

Use of USDA Food Pattern Food Groups Amounts in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines

Separate from MyPlate, food manufacturers may want to make statements on labeling about the amount of a food group contributed by a food, as it relates to the USDA Food Patterns found in the 2010 DGA. To ensure such statements are not misleading, statements about amounts of foods (in cups or ounces) may be disclosed for products that are considered to be “healthy” and that are compositionally consistent with the DGA recommendations as a whole, as described below.

The terms “serving size” and “servings per container” are mandatory components of the Nutrition Facts label on packaged foods. USDA Food Patterns no longer use the term “servings” to identify recommended amounts from each food group. Therefore, to avoid confusion, the term “servings” should not be used in relation to food group amounts provided by a packaged food product. Recommended food group amounts in the USDA Food Pattern Equivalents Database (FPED)² for many foods may be found at: www.ars.usda.gov/Services/docs.htm?docid=17558.

In order to disclose the FPED amount in conjunction with the USDA Food Patterns in the 2010 DGA or MyPlate, the following is a guide:

- The food must contain a “food and nutrient to increase” (as defined in the 2010 DGA).
- The food product must meet the criteria for the use of the claim “healthy,” as defined by USDA and FDA in 9 CFR 317.365(d) and 381.465(d) and 21 CFR 101.65(d)(2), respectively. (“Healthy” criteria include limits on fat and sodium.)
- The food should not provide a substantial amount of calories from added sugars.

Note: As stated above, MyPlate and food group amounts may be listed separately on packaging or together. However, whenever statements are made regarding the food group amounts that a product contains, these products should meet the criteria for “healthy”.

¹ Nutrient-dense foods and beverages are lean or low in solid fats, and minimize or exclude added solid fats, sugars, starches, and sodium. Ideally, they also are in forms that retain naturally occurring components, such as dietary fiber.

² These equivalents have been referred to as MPED (MyPyramid Equivalents Database). When the next dataset is released, the database will be called the USDA FPED (Food Pattern Equivalents Database).